

**ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP**  
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**Memorandum**

**To: ENRP Co-Chairs Sean O'Connor & Barry Weinstein, MD**

**From: Government Affairs Subcommittee Chair Peter McMahon**

**Re: August & September 2003 meetings**

**Date: September 26, 2003**

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The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Government Affairs Subcommittee met August 11 and September 10, 2003 at Christino's at the Amherst Marriott. Present for the August meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Weinstein, and Sheffer. Present for the September meeting (a joint meeting with the Economic Development Subcommittee) were subcommittee members McMahon, Ellis, Meal, St. Pierre, and Weinstein, as well as members of the Economic Development Subcommittee.

Electronic Permitting

Subcommittee Member Sheffer gave an update on electronic permitting. The pilot is underway, and is being tested with the pilot communities of the Town of Lockport, Wales, the Village of Hamburg, Amherst, and the City of Tonawanda. Ciminelli and Ellicott Development have agreed to test the site, and the City of Buffalo is also participating, although they will not be part of the pilot as they could overwhelm it.

As part of Erie County's contract, following the pilot the Institute will offer municipalities throughout Erie County the opportunity to become involved in the system. This presentation will also be given to Niagara County municipalities. Erie County has committed funds for EC municipalities who wish to join; funding responsibility is pending in Niagara County.

The pilot municipalities have until August 21 to test the pilot site and submit any changes. The Institute will have a completed pilot site soon after. Attempts are being made to standardize the permit application.

Subcommittee Member Barry Weinstein suggested that ENRP take a lead role in the marketing of the effort. Subcommittee Member Laura St. Pierre also offered the Buffalo Niagara Partnership's assistance. Weinstein added that this needs to be coordinated with the BNP's permitting efforts in

Buffalo. Subcommittee Chair Peter McMahon suggested that residential developers be added to the project.

### REDD

The UB Institute of Local Governance and Regional Growth – at the request of the County of Erie – convened a meeting to discuss the future of the Regional Economic Development Database. It was decided that the REDD has value in our efforts to create an infrastructure for economic development in the region, that it should remain housed at UB, and that a more diversified funding commitment will be put in place. (For more details on this meeting please refer to a presentation later on the September 26 general meeting agenda.)

Weinstein noted that the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise – REDD’s primary user – felt very strongly that the database had value, and several members talked of REDD’s place in our efforts to compete successfully with other regions.

### Pooled Health Insurance

Weinstein informed the subcommittee that Erie County is currently negotiating a new health insurance contract, and that perhaps Niagara County and the municipalities could join in as well to achieve lower rates due to economies of scale. The group agreed this is worth pursuing, but McMahon noted that the original bid must be written properly to allow for the possibility.

### Other Topics

Other topics discussed included MUNNIX (still on hold until Niagara County’s new risk manager is put in place), the Regional Economic Development Strategy, the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority, and a mobile county clerk’s office that had a stop in Grand Island.